

REMARKS

Applicant has amended Claim 1, from which Claims 2, 3 and 19 depend, to clarify the present invention.

Applicant's invention is a workpiece-transfer device that is used to load a material workpiece in a workpiece-machining device and unload a machined product workpiece from the workpiece-machining device. The workpiece-transfer device includes a movement means with a rectangular coordinate system, for moving a traveling body in a first horizontal direction along the direction in which the workpiece-machining device and a workpiece-storage device stand, with the workpiece-machining device and the workpiece-storage device being in a line with the workpiece-transfer device located therebetween, as well as in a second horizontal direction orthogonal to the first horizontal direction. The traveling body includes a gripping means for gripping a material or product workpiece, and the workpiece-storage device includes both a product-housing section arranged for stacking of machined product workpieces and a material-housing section arranged for stacking of material workpieces provided in parallel, on one side of the workpiece-machining device, in the second direction. Such an arrangement, with the benefits provided thereby, is not taught or suggested in the reference cited.

Reconsideration and removal of the rejection of Applicant's claims as anticipated, under 35 U.S.C. §102(b), by Kawada et al. (U.S. 5,358,375) are respectfully requested in view of the present amendments to Claim 1 and the following remarks.

In response to the arguments presented in the previous response filed by Applicant, the Office Action alleges that Kawada teaches a workpiece-storage device 5R-L having a product-housing section 5L and material-housing section 5R in parallel, on one side (the front) of a working-machining device 1, in a second direction orthogonal to a first direction.

Applicant believes that the Office Action is completely overlooking the fact that the present claimed workpiece-machining device and workpiece-storage device are in line. Kawada's storage devices are not in line in a first direction with a workpiece-machining device, with sections of the workpiece-storage device parallel and in a direction orthogonal to the first direction. Also, Kawada does not have a workpiece-transfer device in line and between a workpiece-machining device and a workpiece-storage device.

Applicant has amended Claim 1 to emphasize that the workpiece-machining device and the workpiece-storage device are in a line, in one direction, with the workpiece-transfer device located therebetween and that the workpiece-storage device includes a product-housing device and a material-housing section that are provided in parallel on one side of the workpiece-machining device in a second direction.

As discussed in Applicant's specification, the present claimed arrangement provides for a square layout of an entire facility, including the workpiece-machining device and the workpiece-storage device, so as to enable the effective use of the floor area of a factory, which feature would not be provided by the Kawada device.

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/400,833

In view of the present amendments to Claim 1 and the above remarks, Applicant's Claims 1-3 and 19 are believed to be patentable, and early action towards allowance thereof is respectfully requested.

If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to Claim 1 by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned "Version with markings to show changes made."

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, Applicant respectfully petitions for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

ARMSTRONG, WESTERMAN & HATTORI, LLP

William G. Kratz, Jr.
Attorney for Applicant
Reg. No. 22,631

WGK/nrp
Atty. Docket No. 991059
Suite 1000, 1725 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006
(202) 659-2930



23850

PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE

Enclosures: Version with markings to show changes made

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claim 1 as follows:

1. (Thrice Amended) A workpiece-transfer device for loading a material workpiece in a workpiece-machining device and unloading a machined product workpiece from the workpiece-machining device, characterized in that the workpiece-transfer device includes a movement means with a rectangular coordinate system for moving a traveling body in a first horizontal direction along the direction in which the workpiece-machining device and a workpiece-storage device stand, said workpiece-machining device and said workpiece-storage device being in a line with said workpiece-transfer device located therebetween, [at one side of the workpiece-machining device in a line] as well as in a second horizontal direction orthogonal to the first horizontal direction, and in that said traveling body includes a gripping means for gripping a material or product workpiece, wherein said workpiece-storage device includes a product-housing section arranged for stacking of machined product workpieces and a material-housing section arranged for stacking of material workpieces provided in parallel, on [said] one side of said workpiece-machining device, in said second direction.